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# CANADA'S GOVERNMENT MAKES TWO IMPORTANT INVESTMENTS IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**2-3082**

**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES, (August 27, 2008)** - The Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, today announced two important investments that will help strengthen and diversify the economy of the Northwest Territories, and assist in supporting Aboriginal workers to take advantage of local labour market opportunities.

"With these two initiatives, our Government is reinforcing its commitment to fostering private and public sector partnerships that help Aboriginal people and Northerners get the skills and training they need to take advantage of opportunities in the North and across Canada", said Minister Strahl.

Minister Strahl first announced $9 million in funding to the Mine Training Society on behalf of the Honourable Monte Solberg, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development.

"Canada's Government is committed to creating the best educated, most skilled, most flexible workforce in the world. This is a good news story about co-operation between government, First Nations, the training sector and industry," said Minister Strahl. "It will enable Northerners to participate in greater numbers and at higher skill levels in the mining industry.

Under Human Resources and Social Development Canada's Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership (ASEP) program, the Mine Training Society will prepare Aboriginal people for long-term employment in the Northwest Territories' mining sector. Over a three year period, the project is expected to provide training and skills development opportunities to at least 500 Aboriginal people leading to careers in the Northwest Territories' mining and mine service sectors.

"The mining sector offers tremendous opportunities for NWT residents" said Robert McLeod, Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. "On behalf of the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment and the Government of the Northwest Territories, I commend this additional investment in education for this sector. The industry has identified mining occupations that are in demand across Canada. This funding will train more NWT Aboriginal students in these occupations and will allow them to enter the workforce experienced and ready to advance. This focused training will also include career and leadership development skills."

"We are pleased to have the federal government invest another $9 million with the Mine Training Society," said Brad Enge, Chairperson, Mine Training Society. "This will give us, and our partners – aboriginal governments, industry and the Government of the Northwest Territories – the ability to assist aboriginal people in developing their skills to get good jobs at the mines in the Northwest Territories — and not simply entry level jobs but career track employment."

Minister Strahl also announced funding of $2.1 million for the Pooled Capital Fund (PCF) which will enable NWT's seven Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDC) to improve their ability to provide local businesses and entrepreneurs with lines of credit, business loans and loan guarantees. Funds will also be available for larger loans to support business diversification. CFDCs are incorporated, non profit organisations that support business development throughout NWT communities.

Funding for the proposed PCF comes from the Government of Canada's Strategic Investments in Northern

Economic Development (SINED) program. In the NWT, the SINED investment plan focuses on building knowledge in key economic sectors, enhancing economic infrastructure, developing capacity and promoting economic diversification.

Canada's Government recognizes that the most effective way to address the standard of living faced by Aboriginal people is by increasing their participation in the labour market. Launched in 2003 and renewed in 2007, ASEP will train more than 16,000 Aboriginal people and support them to move into jobs in and around their communities. ASEP's overall objective is sustainable employment in major economic industries, leading to lasting benefits for Aboriginal communities, families and individuals.

"Our Government is proud to support economic development and training initiatives like these that help ensure Northerners and Aboriginal people may participate in and benefit from the North's fast-growing economy," added Minister Strahl.

"I am also pleased with the support being offered to NWT's Community Futures Development Corporations" said Robert McLeod. "The Government of the Northwest Territories supports these organizations because of their focus on supporting small business. Additional lending capital through the Pooled Capital Fund will allow Community Futures to expand on the excellent services now being provided and address the needs of a greater number of small businesses in our communities."

These two latest announcements reinforce Canada's commitment to promoting sustainable economic development in the North as part of an integrated Northern Strategy.

Backgrounder - Building on Success: New Directions for Mine Training in the Northwest Territories

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Date Modified:2008-08-28

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# Backgrounder - Building on Success: New Directions for Mine Training in the Northwest Territories

The *Building on Success: New Directions for Mine Training in the Northwest Territories* project, operated by the Northwest Territories' Mine Training Society, will address the increasing labour shortage in current and developing mine projects, while achieving the goal of sustainable employment for Aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories.

Objectives include:

- Preparing Aboriginal people for long-term employment in the Northwest Territories' mining sector;
- Supporting Aboriginal people in making the transition to employment through innovative community-based programming, pre-employment training and on-going investments into employee retention and career advancement; and
- Supplying the Northwest Territories' mining sector with a prepared and skilled labour force to meet the employment requirements of current and future economic development activities.

Partners in the *Building on Success: New Directions for Mine Training in the Northwest Territories* project are: BHP Billiton, Diavik Diamond Mines Inc, De Beers Canada Mining Inc., Dogrib Treaty 11 Council, Lutsel K'e Dene Council, North Slave Métis Alliance, Yellowknives Dene First Nation, Aurora College, and the Government of the Northwest Territories' Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

The Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership (ASEP) program is an opportunity driven initiative that focuses on maximizing Aboriginal employment on major economic developments through formalized partnerships. ASEP was initially launched in October 2003 as a five-year $85 million initiative targeted at developing the skills of the Aboriginal work force. In July 2007, the Government of Canada expanded and extended the ASEP program to 2012.

In Budget 2007, the Government of Canada committed to fostering partnerships involving the private and public sectors that help Aboriginal people get the skills and training they need to take advantage of opportunities in the North and across Canada.

Date Modified:2008-08-28